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AUTHOR Svobodny, Linda A.
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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the outcomes of two intervention programs for 60 male juvenile offenders (aged 13-17 years). Group I (30 Ss) were placed at a correctional camp facility modeled after the Outward Bound program, which incorporates a particular treatment concept designed to increase self esteem. Group II participants (30 Ss) were placed on probation within their home community. Pre- and post-treatment self concept scores were employed for both groups. Group I was given additional cognitive and social assessments. Research findings indicated that there was a significant difference in post-treatment self concept scores between Group I and Group II. The adjusted mean score for Group I was significantly higher than the adjusted mean for Group II. Group I made significant gains in self concept scores from pre-treatment to post-treatment assessment. Group II did not make significant gains. Investigation of the use of pre-treatment cognitive variables to predict post-treatment social adjustment scores for Group I revealed a significant proportion of the variance can be predicted. The single best predictor was pre-treatment arithmetic scores. (Author/SBH)

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Linda A. Svobodny
Special Education - Lommen Hall
Moorhead State University
Moorhead, MN 56560

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Biographical Paragraph

Linda A. Svobodny is currently an Instructor in Special Education at Moorhead State University. She has an M.Ed. in Educational Psychology and a M.S. in School Psychology. She is currently working toward her Doctorate in Special Education. She is a member of the Council for Exceptional Children; Advisor for the Student Council for Exceptional Children, and has served on the State Board of Governors for the Minnesota State Council for Exceptional Children, is a member of the Association for Retarded Citizens, and serves as a foster parent for troubled youth.

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Increasing Self Concept
Through Outward Bound

by Linda A. Svobodny

The following is written based on the findings from a research project entitled, "A Controlled Study of Self Image of Youthful Offenders in an Outward Bound Program and on Probation."

Juvenile Delinquency: A Significant Problem

A report from the President's Commission of Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice provides these figures:

1. One boy in every six is referred to juvenile court today.

2. Forty percent of all male children in the United States will be arrested for nontraffic offenses during their lives.

3. In 1965, some two million Americans were received in prisons or juvenile training schools or placed on probation.

4. While the 15-17 year old group constitutes only 5.4% of the population, it is involved in 12.8% of all arrests.

5. The 15 and 16 year olds have the highest arrest rate in the United States.

6. Of 400,000 youths detained in 1965, approximately 25% were held in jails because of the lack of appropriate facilities. (Carney, 1974, p. 10)

Juvenile justice systems report a steady climb in the arrest rate of juveniles from age 10 until the peak period for arrests at age 16. According to a Newsweek report in 1975, more crimes are committed by children under 15 than by adults over 25. The majority of runaways are 15 or younger (Stauber, 1977). Crimes committed by youths under 25 years of age constitute 53 percent of crime in the United States (Carney, 1974).

> We do not know what changes need to be made in family, school and community resources to address this early onset of criminal behavior. . . Information is needed about the interrelationships among cognitive, social and biological growth variables, or the suitability of various types of intervention programs for juvenile offenders. (Stauber, 1977, pp. 34-35)

Schools, courts, homes and other social institutions deny this age group an active, responsible role in society. Early adolescents are often neglected, misunderstood and miseducated. Young people are at times kept out of the work community and out of a vital home life while they are kept in a school or juvenile correction facility. They are often portrayed by the media as dangerous or undesirable. They are treated like children, with promises of coming responsibilities when they grow up (Stauber, 1977).

To continue to ignore the potential of these human beings, we run the risk of diminishing the adolescent's sense of self worth and increasing the adolescent's dependence on peers for reinforcement and esteem. Millions of dollars are spent each year on juvenile delinquency treatment programs,

yet in the fiscal year 1971, the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development allocated less than 1% of its grants and contracts budget on adolescence research (Stauber, 1977).

Importance of the Present Study

Evaluation of the effect of various intervention strategies has been lacking in many correctional programs. The present study attempts to determine whether one of the stated goals and outcomes of Outward Bound programs, increased self esteem, did occur in a group of male juvenile offenders who participated in the program for 90 days. A comparison was made of the outward bound program and the traditional program of community probation.

Investigation of related cognitive and social factors may give valuable information on the relationship of each factor to social adjustment. This may be helpful in determining placem[illegible] and treatment of juvenile offenders and in program planning. Perhaps an eventual outcome of such research may shed some light on the design of methods to prevent juvenile delinquency.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study was to compare pre- and post-test self concept scores of juvenile offenders from two intervention programs. Thirty juvenile males were used from each program. One group had been placed on probation within the home community. Juveniles in the other group were participants at a correctional camp facility modeled after Outward Bound programs. Related cognitive and social variables for the juveniles at the Outward Bound camp were also assessed.

Limitations of the Study

In any field research, there are numerous uncontrolled variables. The impossibility of controlling all factors is well documented. The two groups of juveniles were of similar ages and all individuals had been adjudicated by juvenile correction authorites in Minnesota. However, the selection process that determined which juveniles were to be placed on probation and which juveniles were to be placed at the Outward Bound Camp included many uncontrolled variables. Various juvenile courts have individual philosophies and procedures regarding the placement of juveniles within or outside of the home community. In addition, there may have been existent or non-existent support systems available in the community for certain juveniles which may have contributed to the placement decision. Therefore, from the beginning there may have been many factors contributing to the selection process resulting in non-equivalent groups of juvenile offenders.

Although the majority of juveniles at the Outward Bound Camp came from rural and semi-rural communities, they did represent a wider geographic area than the group on probation. The probation group consisted entirely of juveniles from one county in Minnesota.

Each program itself contained numerous uncontrolled internal variables. Neither probation nor the Camp were extremely structured programs; therefore, treatment was not always consistent or similar within each program for different juveniles. Philosophy and basic approach varied from counselor to counselor and from probation officer to probation officer.

The relatively short time period (90 days) during which change was measured leads to questions regarding the long term effects of any such change. The measurement of self concept consisted of the use of a self report device. Self reporting is often questioned as a viable, reliable method of measurement. Cronbach (1970) describes self report instruments as limited by a variety of distortions which prevent acceptance of them as frank and valid self-descriptions. Statements often do not directly lend themselves to evaluation by observable action.

Philosophy of Juvenile Courts

The objectives of the juvenile court have been to "reform, uplift, to develop, and to make the child a worthy citizen" (Orlando, 1975, p. 349). However, these objectives have not been reached.

> The juvenile court has not succeeded significantly in rehabilitating delinquent youth, in reducing or even stemming the tide of delinquency, or in bringing justice and compassion to the child offender. (President's Commission on Law Enforcement, 1967, a., p. 80)

In the Uniform Juvenile Court Law (1973), the purposes of the juvenile court are described as:

1) to provide for the care, protection, and wholesome moral, mental and physical development of children coming within its provisions;
2) consistent with the protection of public interest to remove the taint of criminality and the consequences of criminal behavior and to substitute therefore a program of treatment, training and rehabilitation. (Coates, 1975, p. 133)

These ideals reflect the theory that a child is a product of his environment and that he can benefit from treatment.

There are generally two classification for youths involved in the juvenile court: juvenile delinquents who have violated criminal laws and children in need of supervision (who have committed status offenses: truancy or running away). The emphasis in juvenile court is to help the child and provide rehabilitation services. Whether the child has committed a criminal act or whether it is a case of truancy, the youth is often labeled and stigmatized by the term "juvenile delinquent." "The stigma of conviction will reflect upon him for life. It hurts his self respect." (Orlando, 1975, p. 363)

An attempt is being made to change the handling of juvenile offenders. Institutional care has come under fire because many reformers believe that juveniles when institutionalized develop more criminal skills. Community support and contacts for the juvenile are disrupted, and they are labeled for a criminal career; therefore, a number of community based programs and non-institutional plans have been implemented. The literature suggests the immensity of problems in dealing with juvenile offenders. Current philosophy in corrections is progressing toward rehabilitative treatment; however, as yet the success rate has not proven to be very positive (Coates, 1975).

Whatever decisions are made regarding a youthful offender, whatever program is implemented, one of the important issues that generally remains unsolved is what will happen to the youth when he returns to his community or home:

> Youthful offenders are often released from treatment programs and returned to the community with little or no continued contact with persons in the correctional agency. Coping with community situations

will prove too much for many of these youngsters, who quickly find themselves in trouble and back in the courtroom. (Coates 1975, p. 139)

The California Treatment Project which employed an intensive community-based parole model, resulted in a 20% drop in recidivism over a two year period. Returning youths may need a strong advocate in the community to encourage and support them. (Coates, 1975)

Prevention and intervention outcome studies have not revealed conclusive results. Reports of systems such as matching clients with treatment and use of community supports in place of institutionalization give evidence that possibilities exist in increasing prevention and intervention success with juvenile offenders. One of the major concerns is that of recidivism. The community support systems may be a vital link yet to be sufficiently researched.

Self Concept as Related to Delinquency

Traditionally most juveniles involved in delinquent acts have been male, lower or working class and frequently of minority status. Yet, public concern is growing because of the increased participation of younger children and the increased number of females, middle class, and rural youth involved in a variety of crimes (Lundman, McFarlane, & Scarpitti, 1976).

The typical delinquent subject dislikes himself and has a relatively negative self-concept--particularly regarding his behavior, his moral ethical and his family self. He is not defensive and makes little effort to portray himself in a good light. He reveals considerable conflict, confusion, variability and uncertainty in his self-perceptions and finds it easier to affirm what he is (and that is mostly bad) than to reject what he is not . . . He

has little real personality strength for withstanding stress and frustration. The overall picture is of a troubled, unhappy, deviant and disturbed person who finds it difficult to cope with life. . . The typical delinquent is in a state of extreme inner tension and dissonance. In this light it is no surprise that such individuals are so often at odds with the external world. (Fitts, 1969, p. 15)

The question why one youngster becomes delinquent and another from the same neighborhood does not, has been raised for some time. Reckless (1957) theorizes that the non-delinquent uses a favorable self concept as insulation against delinquency. An unfavorable self concept thus provides little insulation for the delinquent. Self esteem is described by Coopersmith (1959) as a personal judgment of worthiness which is expressed in the attitudes a person holds toward himself. Numerous studies by Kaplan (1975, 1976) support the notion that self-rejection or a low self-concept increases the probability of adopting dishonest, delinquent or criminal response patterns.

> Perhaps one of the distinctions between persons who will and those who will not experience difficulty with the law in their formative and later years lies in the extent to which a socially acceptable self image has been developed. (Reckless et al., 1957, p. 569)

In a recent study by Thomas (1972), delinquents in an intensive rehabilitation program who showed the greatest improvement in self-concept, also maintained the most modified social behaviors upon leaving the institution. Thomas maintained that the relationship appears to be strong between improvement in self-concept and improved social functioning.

Outward Bound Programs

Outward Bound is a juvenile rehabilitation program specifically designed to increase self esteem. In this particular treatment concept,

> the thrust is to accept the offender, emphasize his worthfulness, build up his self-esteem and confidence and through personal achievement grant him an identity that hopefully will not be prone to extinction of rapid diminution once he leaves the program (Chun, 1974).

In England, during World War II there was concern about the British seamen who gave up their lives with little struggle while more experienced, less physically able sailors survived. As a result, Dr. Kurt Hahn established the first Outward Bound School in Aberdovey, Wales. In addition to physical conditioning, Dr. Hahn wanted to develop group pride, personal contribution and trust in oneself and others. This school, and those that followed, structured stressful situations to unify groups toward a common goal as well as to provide repeated successful experiences to establish confidence and a more positive self image (Willman & Chun, 1974).

In 1964, the Colorado Outward Bound School accepted its first adjudicated delinquents (n=5). The program involved mountain walking, back packing, high altitude camping, solo survival, rappelling and rock climbing. The following year 25 more adjudicated youngsters completed the program in Colorado, Minnesota, and Maine (Chun, 1974).

The philosophy of Outward Bound programs for juvenile offenders is described by Kelly and Baer (1971) in these words:

> It is of little value to attempt to point out to an adjudicated delinquent that he is far more capable than he feels himself to be.

What is necessary, however, is to devise a set of circumstances whereby the delinquent boy can clearly demonstrate his competence to himself. Only then will opportunities for concrete, impressive accomplishment promote personal growth.

A program called Homeward Bound was established in Massachusetts; it was modeled after previous Outward Bound programs. Willman and Chun (1974) conducted a 7 to 14 month follow-up of a group of Homeward Bound participants and a group assigned to a traditional correctional institution.

The selection for either group was on a space available basis. The background characteristics of the Homeward Bound participants (n=178) and the institution participants (n=75) showed no significant differences. The Homeward Bound group had a recidivism rate of 20.8% as opposed to 42.7% of the control group. This was very similar to the research by Kelly and Baer (1971) which showed 20% of the Outward Bound and 42% of the control group recidivated.

Factors observed in the Willman and Chun (1974) study were:

1) Homeward Bound participants are able to stay out of trouble longer than participants in regular institutional programs. Only 38% of those who recidivated following the Homeward Bound program did so within the first 6 months as compared to 72% of the control group.
2) There was an increased chance of success in Homeward Bound as the chronological age of the participant increased.
3) The marital status of the parents affected success or failure in the Homeward Bound program. Participants whose parents were separated showed poorer results (22.6% failure) than in any other marital status category.

4) There was a significant difference in "last school grade attended" and success-failure in the Homeward Bound Program. The higher the school grade attained, the better the chance for success.

5) There was a tendency for persons who committed "assault against persons" and "larceny" being more apt to experience success in the Homeward Bound Program. Contrariwise, persons in the "stubborn child" category have a marked tendency toward failure within the program.

Kelly and Baer (1971) described Outward Bound programs as presenting challenges which give youths an opportunity to find out who they really are and what their limits may be.

The program being investigated in the present study is one which is modeled after the Outward Bound concept. Outward Bound has been described as a program which teaches youngsters how to achieve a "high" without the use of alcohol or drugs. It facilitates the development of courage, confidence and self worth.

Method

The research and its results reported here are the outcomes of the study of two intervention programs for juvenile offenders. Group I participants were placed at a correctional camp facility modeled after the Outward Bound program. Group II participants were placed on probation within their home community. Pre- and post-treatment self concept scores were employed for both groups. Group I was given additional cognitive and social assessments.

The present study included two groups of juvenile males. Each group contained 30 male juveniles who had been adjudicated by the juvenile court within the previous 2-3 weeks.

The participants of both treatment groups ranged in age from 13 to 17 years. Group I (Outward Bound) consisted of the following: one 14 year old, seven 15 year olds, eleven 16 year olds and eleven 17 year olds. Group II (probation) consisted of: one 13 year old, seven 15 year olds, thirteen 16 year olds, and nine 17 year olds.

Treatment Group I

Group I participated in an intensive three month program at a Correctional Camp - a youth treatment facility sponsored by the Minnesota State Department of Corrections. The camp is located in the George Washington State Forest in Northern Minnesota. The camp offers a short term program designed to build confidence in young males between the ages of 14 to 18. It is intended primarily to serve as a preventative resource for the so-called "less sophisticated" boy who is experiencing difficulty at home, in school, and in the community. The primary goal of the camp curriculum is to involve youths in as many successful experiences as possible during their residence at camp. There are basically four programs in operation at the camp: education, work program, recreation program, and challenge; each of which are explained below.

The education program provides youths with resources as any academic level. Certified teachers and learning disabilities instructors arrange education programs to meet the youths' needs. Some students work toward high school equivalency exams (G.E.D.), some continue coursework from their home school, while others work in remediation programs. Student success is reinforced with praise and privileges. Classes are small and there is extensive one-to-one assistance. The boys spend every morning working in educational programs.

The work program involves short, meaningful projects. The goal is to have all students participate in vocational and work skill programs at least 20 hours per week. Occupational and pre-vocational training are offered in areas, such as, construction, occupational foods, small engines; forestry, wildlife management, and plant maintenance.

The recreation program emphasizes activities which may be pursued as constructive hobbies after returning home. The curriculum depends on the seasons. Canoeing, skiing, basketball, pool and swimming are a few of the options.

The challenge program is a wilderness experience. It is designed to build individual self confidence, develop leadership abilities, and teach the importance of group effort. The first phase consists of training and general conditioning. The second phase involves actual expeditions. These are planned to be rugged and difficult in order to build self-confidence and to teach the importance of teamwork. "Solo" camping is the last phase of challenge. It involves camping alone in an isolated area for three days and nights, marking the climax of the experience at camp.

Treatment Group II

Group II participants came from one county in Minnesota. The participants were selected on the basis of the first 30 juveniles placed on probation who were male and aged 13 to 17 years old. They were placed on probation for 90 days in their home community under the direction of the county family court services. Each probationer met with a probation officer once a week. Participants continued to live at home, attend school, and/or work just as they had prior to their adjudication.

Procedures for Group Comparison

The Piers-Harris self concept test was administered to both groups as a pre-test when each boy entered his treatment program and as a post-test at the end of 90 days. Group I was given additional assessment; its participants were given pre- and post-academic achievement tests (Gates-MacGinitie and WRAT), and intelligence assessment (Slosson Intelligence Test) and a social adjustment evaluation (The Bristol Social Adjustment Guide).

The proposed hypotheses of this study were:

1. There will be a significant difference in measured post-self concept scores between Group I (juveniles who were placed at an Outward Bound camp for 90 days) and Group II (juveniles who were placed on probation for 90 days).
2. There will be a significant difference between pre-treatment and post-treatment self-concept scores, for Group I.
3. There will be a significant difference between pre-treatment and post-treatment self-concept scores, for Group II.
4. A significant proportion of the variance in the Bristol Social Adjustment Scores of juveniles placed in the Outward Bound intervention program and tested following the 90-day treatment can be accounted for by the following pre-treatment measures: IQ, academic achievement, and self concept scale scores.

Results

Discussion: Hypothesis 1

Group I had lower pre-treatment self-concept scores than Group II. Through the use of the formula for Analysis of Covariance, the adjusted

means for each group were determined. The results of the analysis of covariance indicate that there was a significant difference in the post-test scores for the two groups. The difference was significant at the .01 level. The post test for Group I indicate a significantly higher mean than Group II. (See Table 1)

Discussion: Hypothesis 2 & 3

Repeated measurements of pre/post-treatment self-concept scores were employed for Group I and Group II. The difference between pre-treatment and post-treatment scores was significant for Group I (Outward Bound). The post-treatment scores showed a positive increase in self-concept. Therefore, the findings seem to substantiate the claim by the camp that this experience does increase the participants self images. (See Table 2)

The difference between the pre-treatment and post-treatment self-concept scores of boys placed on probation was not significant. The actual scores indicate a positive change in self-concept scores; however, the difference was not large enough to be statistically significant. (See Table 3)

Discussion: Hypothesis 4

Measures of cognitive variables in this study were significant predictors of the criterion variable, social adjustment using Multiple Linear Regression Analysis. (See Table 4) The findings indicate that 32% of the variance was accounted for by the group of cognitive variables. This tends to support the notion that educational achievement is related to social adjustment. Within the study, the juveniles pre-treatment arithmetic scores variable was the single most significant predictor of post-treatment social adjustment. The least useful predictor was IQ. As would be expected, all achievement scores were highly correlated with IQ and each with other.

Conclusions

The present research confirms the claim by the Outward Bound camp of increasing participants' self-concept scores. The boys who participated in the camp program for 90 days demonstrated a significant increase in measured self-concept from pre-treatment to post-treatment. Juveniles placed on probation, in this study, did not show a significant increase in measured self-concept scores. The results indicate that the juveniles on probation also increased in self-concept measures; however, it was not at a statistically significant level. It would appear that a greater increase in self-concept occurred in the participants of the Outward Bound program. The data also indicates that the camp group had lower pre-treatment self-concept scores than the probation group. Discussions with local corrections authorities indicate that this difference at the onset would be typical. The court personnel state that through the selection process juvenile males who appear to be in need of confidence building are selected for placement at the Outward Bound Camp. The present study supports the appropriateness of this selection based on the data indicating a significant increase in self-concepts of participants at the Outward Bound Camp.

The author also evaluated whether it was possible to predict a portion of the eventual success in terms of post-treatment social adjustment of the juveniles placed at the camp by measuring the following group of variables: IQ, self-concept, and academic achievement? From the present investigation, it appears that it is possible to predict a significant proportion of the variance in social adjustment scores. Successful achievement levels, particularly arithmetic scores, are related to eventual social adjustment. IQ

does not appear to be related to post-treatment social adjustment. Thus, it might be assumed that whether a juvenile benefits from the camp program does not depend upon his IQ. Factors which appear to relate more to his post-treatment social adjustment are those related to academic achievement. These findings support the notion that academic achievement is an important factor to be considered for inclusion in programs designed to produce positive social adjustment. These findings are similar to those of the Willman and Chun (1974) study which found a correlation between school success and success in the Outward Bound Program. Jensen (1976) describes achievement as strongly related to delinquency status. Therefore, academic training is an important part of intervention with adjudicated juveniles.

Recommendations

The author of the present study recommends several areas for further investigation. The most significant are the study of larger numbers of adjudicated juveniles in various programs to determine the appropriateness of the selection process and of the treatment, the follow-up studies of juveniles who leave treatment programs, and the study of ways in which to assist juveniles in academic areas and social areas as well as the development of support systems to help prevent them from becoming juvenile offenders.

If the theory that a poor self-concept may lead juveniles into delinquency is valid, and if juvenile treatment programs, such as the Outward Bound, do enhance the juveniles' self-concepts, perhaps the development of more such programs is warranted. From this study of Outward Bound and probation one finds that Outward Bound does increase self-concepts of adjudicated juveniles. Hence, it would appear to the author that the findings of this research support both the assumptions underlying the theory of self-concept, and the practice of treatment programs such as Outward Bound.

Table 1

Means on Post-Test Scores of Self Concept

	Unadjusted	Adjusted
Group I	56.83	57.429
Group II	55.43	54.835

Table 2

Direct Difference: Correlated t Test
Pre/Post-Treatment Self Concept Scores
Group I--Outward Bound Camp

Mean of the Differences	Standard Error of the Mean for the Differences	Correlated t Test
$\overline{D}$	$S_{\overline{X}_D}$	t
-7.20	1.78	4.04*

*significant at .001 df = 29

Table 3

Direct Difference: Correlated t Test
Group II--Probation

Mean of the Differences	Standard Error of the Mean for the Differences	Correlated t Test
$\overline{D}$	$S_{\overline{X}_D}$	t
-3.23	2.40	1.35

df = 29

Table 4

Cognitive Variables Predicting Social Adjustment

Predictor Variables	Multiple R	R^2	Simple R
Pre-Arithmetic	.41	.17	-.41*
Pre-Self Concept	.48	.23	-.26
Pre-Reading	.50	.25	.01
Pre-Vocabulary	.56	.32	-.31
IQ	.57	.32	-.21

*.01 level of significance df = 28

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